

26 Battalion Association  
Victorian Branch

26 AUST. INF. BN. (AIF) "NEVER UNPREPARED"

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# NEWSLETTER

November 2009

ISSUE 15



*The new generation and new President, Jeff Collings heads towards Bell's Hotel after the 2009 Anzac Day Parade in Melbourne*

## WELCOME TO NEWSLETTER No. 15

WELCOME to the latest issue of 26 Battalion Reunion Association, Victorian Branch newsletter.

Thanks to all those members who have contributed to this Newsletter.

Any additional material sent to me for future editions would be most appreciated.

- Norm Turrell

## ANZAC DAY 2009 REPORT

**A**BOUT twenty-two people marched under the banner of the 26<sup>th</sup> Battalion honouring the men and women who fought for their country in various wars, but they held a special spot in their heart for those of the 26<sup>th</sup> Battalion and remembered those who are no longer with us.

Some of our veterans rode in the two cars in front of the banner for the first time this year. However those in the cars had to be diverted

because a wooden ramp at the Shrine had broken under the weight of a troop truck just ahead of them and so missed passing the Eternal Flame.

Forty people attended the seventeenth reunion of the 26 Battalion Association Victorian Branch which was held on Anzac Day 2009 at Bells Hotel. Norm Turrell thanked all those who came along.

Remembering those who are no longer with us

during one minute's silence and following the reading of *The Ode*, Norm announced that four former soldiers, Sgt George Sills, Sgt Norman Dowey, Sig Dennis Ryan and Ass/Adj Lt Ron Bishop who had served our battalion with distinction had passed away just prior to this year's Anzac Day.

Apologies were received from Noel Mackay, Doris and John Rowe, Ken Mackellin and Bob Gaudion.

Norm said that Bob Gaudion has done a fine job for the Association since 1992 but his poor health had made him decide to retire as President of 26<sup>th</sup> Battalion Association. Norm said, "So now we have a changing of the guard and I am pleased to announce that our new President is Jeff Collings and he will be supported by Colin Block as Vice President." On behalf of the Association he congratulated the pair and wished them well.

Norm expressed his appreciation for all the arrangements that Jeff had made for this year's gathering, including transport arrangements. "Colin our webmaster has put our Association on the Internet which has proven to be a huge success", he said.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hello to all Victorian 26<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion Association members and our esteemed interstate members who may receive this article.

My name is Jeff Collings and it is an honour to accept the position of President of the Victorian 26<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion Association with Colin Block as Vice President, who collates all information to generate this newsletter.

As this is my first president's report I would like to say thanks to our former presidents and vice presidents who diligently kept the 26<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion afloat. The acknowledgements of these men should not go unnoticed. Norm Turrell and Bob Gaudion; I take my hat off to you. Both of you men have given me very big shoes to fill. There are of course others, who I shall mention, like the late Ray Block, who I admired considerably (maybe because he liked my Cadillac!)

Although my story has been told to some of you already, I became associated with the 26<sup>th</sup> in an unusual way.

I am a proud Australian and am proud of what our Australian soldiers have done in defence of this country. I felt compelled to march in the ANZAC parade in honour of my father Jeffery Gilbert Collings. I carried a khaki coloured duffle bag with '26<sup>th</sup> Inf Bat' blazed across it in bold black ink.

I then convinced my brother Len Collings to help me construct our own banner. I knew one colour was a bluish hue, but unfamiliar with the second. So bold and blue

it was with '26<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion' printed on it. I rang ANZAC house and told them that I wanted to march on behalf of my father, but they said I had to go to Queensland to march because they did not recognise the 26<sup>th</sup> here in Victoria.

This answer was unacceptable, and having been in the forces, I knew that red tape can be very difficult to cut. So naturally I acted and took a stance and just stood next to the 27<sup>th</sup>, which made chronological sense at the time.

As we marched past the control vehicle that checked all banners, which marched past, there was always a sense of confusion. One year the commentators on the ABC said 'here comes the 26<sup>th</sup> again. Poor buggers, it must have been very confusing for them. As soon as we finished the march, we made a quick exit. We rolled up the banner, fired up the Harley and made haste.

This routine took place for a number of years, when one day I noticed a gentleman (Bob Gaudion) holding a sheet of paper with the our battalion printed on it. I approached the gentleman and introduced myself and what I was doing here.

With that he grabbed my wrist, yelled out to Norm and said "Norm, I found him!" "Damn!" I thought, "I have been 'made' and I should have kept my mouth shut". But Norm had nothing but praise and delight to finally make my acquaintance, and as they say "the rest is history".

Finally, I would like to thank Catherine Quagliata for her Dad's story and thank all the others who have contributed to this newsletter.

Regards,  
Jeff Collings



*Bert Barker led the 2009 march for 26th Battalion to the Shrine of Remembrance*

## TOM 'NOBBY' CLARK

By Cathrine Quagliata (nee Clark)

**Tom (Nobby) Clark** recorded on tape some of his war experiences for his family. Here is some of what he said.

"I really wanted to join the Navy at 16 and I tried, but they wouldn't let me, because I was an apprentice painter/signwriter to my father. So anyway, the army couldn't give a damn whether I was an apprentice or not. When I was 18 they called me up. "I was standing on the platform at Townsville and there are two trains. I saw all the blokes sitting on the trains, so I got on one. I'm sitting there and someone came along and said, 'Anybody here's got Townsville on their form?' I said 'I think I have'. He said, 'You're the fellow we're looking for. You're on the wrong train. You should be going to the 31st. Battalion, you're on the one going to the 26th, do you care?' I said, 'No, I don't give a bugger.' So that's how I joined the 26th Battalion"

At Sellheim, Tom did basic training and later at Kuranda, learned Morse code and became a signaller. He doesn't talk much about the unpleasant events, but will tell the story about his dash through the wilds of Bougainville.

Tom continues, "We were on a patrol of some sort and I was the sig. They were ranging shells onto a Japanese position just above us. I had to throw the aerial up over a tree branch. So anyway, the bombs kept coming over. Our Lieutenant, Randall Watts, said 'Righto. Let's get out of here'. So we ran back as far as we could, and as soon as we got there, he said to me, 'Sig, get communications'. I said, 'I can't, sir'. He said, 'Why?' I said, 'because I left my aerial up in the tree. (It had pulled out of the back of the radio) He said, 'Go back and get it' I said 'I will as soon as the bombs stop dropping, sir' He said, 'Go back now. That's an order'. I never ran so bloody fast in my life".

He also recalls, 'Sandy's Bougainville Revue' by HQ Coy 26 Aust. Inf. Bn. on 24th Dec 1944, when, as act 7 on the programme, Kingsley Locke and he played *Chopsticks*.

He talks about Bert Yates, who would make up poems and sound like Stanley Holloway; how, after the war, he joined the Concert Party; how Sid Nicol and he used to sing and harmonise together, songs like *Hand Me Down My Walkin'*

*Cane and Driftin' Down The Shalamar*, how Kingsley Locke and he sat down and sang. He also remembers how Kingsley Locke made a pretty damn fine woman when called upon to do so. Upon returning to Townsville in 1946, he went straight back to his apprenticeship with his father.

In November 1947 he married Clare Toohey and settled in Townsville. They had their first child in January 1949, second in August 1951 and third in April 1953.

He and his father travelled extensively throughout North and West Qld, painting and signwriting. When he heard about the need for a good painter/signwriter in Ayr, south of Townsville, in 1955, he packed up the family and moved there. He and Clare had 2 more children in 1960 and 1962 and have lived there ever since.

From a very early age, Tom has been passionate about music, from tap dancing to playing the guitar and piano and later, teaching himself the clarinet. He fronted the *Moonglow Trio* for many, many years and still plays for the old time dance in Home Hill every Saturday night.

He retired from painting in 1980 and after a couple of years working for local businesses, he retired all together. In 1988, Tom and Clare went on a trip to look up some army mates. In Warwick they met up with David Watt and Kingsley Locke, and *Chopsticks* was played again. They also called in on Charlie Pinder near Mackay, Doug Roy in Gympie and John Maschmedt in Adelaide.

For many Anzac Day Parades, he put on his medals and marched with pride and dignity and this year, 2009, four generations of Clarks marched in the parade in Ayr.

Over quite a few years, around May, Tom arranged a holiday and he and Clare have travelled all over Australia. In 2008 they took their first overseas trip and attended the dawn service at Villers-Bretonneux, in France, for the 90th anniversary of the town's liberation by the ANZAC's. They also visited England, Scotland and Ireland.

In recent years, Tom has been very involved with Legacy and looks after many war widows. In the last few months, he has visited Bill Hume in Townsville and Norm Snell in Charters Towers, and will hopefully be catching up with Kingsley Locke and David Watt in Warwick, before the end of this year.



Tom 'Nobby' Clark  
as he is today

## Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Bernard Callinan MC, MID, DSO

**Lt-Col B.J. Callinan's** citation for his Distinguished Service Order (DSO) states:

For outstanding courage and devotion to duty as CO of the 26th Australian Infantry Battalion (AIF). He was responsible for clearing the enemy and gaining control of the north west coast of Bougainville, he planned the capture of Soraken Peninsula and successfully cleared Saposa Island. He constantly moved amongst his men while carrying out personal reconnaissances of enemy positions. His skillful leadership was outstanding and was instrumental in maintaining a very high morale in the unit.

Author, Gavin Long, described Callinan as lean, long nosed, thin faced and very young looking. Callinan served with the 2/2nd Independent Company and then as Force Commander on Timor in 1942 for which he was awarded an MC, before becoming the second in command of the 31st/51st Battalion. Callinan had only commanded the 26th Battalion since 8 February 1945.

The following is an extract taken from Karl James PhD thesis *The Final Campaigns: Bougainville 1944-1945*.

"Now the 26th Battalion, fresh from the 'nursery' in the Central Sector, came up to the Northern Sector. The battalion was under the command of the youthful 32-year old Lieutenant-Colonel Bernard Callinan. Callinan was already a seasoned leader. Callinan's experience was needed, as his battalion conducted a number of bold amphibious landings that bypassed strong Japanese positions -

moves that were to win him and his battalion high praise.

"The 26th Battalion continued moving north. On 12 March, one of the battalion's companies moved about a mile inland from the coast towards Lalum, and reached the southern end of Soraken Plantation; patrols to the east reached the Nagam River. Forces moving along the coast secured the south bank of the Compton River, it was from here that a series of amphibious landings by barge were made. On the night of 11-12 March, one company landed 1200 yards north of the Compton River and nine days later a second company landed about a mile further north.



*Lt-Col B J Callinan, Commanding Officer of 26th Inf. Battalion, 1945*

"A few days earlier, just before midnight on 5-6 March, one company landed on Saposa Island. It was a textbook operation. Arthur Mathers reported the landing. The men had been resting after days and nights of fighting through muddy jungle and filthy swamps. They had worn the same clothes for days, which stuck to the men's skin 'like a coating of tar'. It had been an all too brief rest and

they were ordered to don their fighting kit, check weapons, and carry full reserves of ammunition and rations. "After a conference with the battalion's commanding officer, the company commander told his men they were to make a landing on Saposa. The sardonic phrase of the Second AIF, 'You'll be sorry' was whispered as the men moved out. Embarking on the barges in the dark, each man whispered 'Sir' as they were checked on the nominal roll. Cigarettes were put out as the barges got underway, heading northwest towards the narrow reef-bound channel into Saposa. The atmosphere was tense as they neared their destination. The engines were cut and there was the sound of muffled metallic clicks; rounds were shot into breaches, clips tested and safety catches on Owen and Bren guns were clicked to automatic. Moving closer to the beach, the men crouched behind the bullet proofing of the barge. When they were only 30 yards from the shore, there was a burst of Japanese machine gun fire. The barge's twin Vickers machine guns returned fire, then the barge hit the beach and the soldiers ran ashore. Killing the Japanese defenders, the Australians moved into the jungle. "By the end of March, the 26th Battalion had cleared the Soraken Peninsula. Callinan signalling brigade headquarters that all organised resistance had ceased. Eager to impress, (Lt-Gen) Savage brought (General) Blamey by launch to the battalion to see firsthand what (Gavin) Long later described as 'a brilliant series of manoeuvres.' "

## TOM 'NOBBY' CLARK PICTURES



*Dave Feather, Tom 'Nobby' Clark and Bill Hume, 1942*



*Four generations the Clark family marching in the Anzac Day parade in Ayr, Queensland. From the left: Tom Clark, Amy Clark (Granddaughter), Joshua Reeves (Great Grandson) and Russell Clark (Son)*

## Sir Bernard Callinan, AC CBE MC DSO 1913-1995

Sir Bernard Callinan was an outstanding soldier in WWII, serving in Timor and Dutch New Guinea. He was awarded the DSO and MC for outstanding leadership and gallantry. He held many positions including director CSR Ltd, director BP (Aust), commissioner of the ABC and SEC, deputy chancellor LaTrobe University, president of the Institute of Engineers Australia and also the Melbourne Cricket Club for five years. He died in 1995 after a long illness.



*Sir Bernard at the dedication of the 26 Battalion memorial tree at Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne, March 1993*

## OLD MEMORIES



*Sergeant Norman Downey BEM, circa 1945*



*Ray Block, Tony Murray and Arthur Ennis, Rockhampton 1992*

## Email: FROM ROD HARDY



"Gordon Hardy passed away in his sleep on 4th of September. I am grateful to your association for him having the opportunity to participate in his first Anzac Day parade. Both Mum and Dad enjoyed the day and Dad spoke of it often. I am sure the family will continue to participate and continue his memory." - Rod Hardy

*Gordon Hardy with his grandson, 2009*

**V LE**  
Gordon Hardy  
Keith Phelan



*Changing of the guard. President Jeff Collings in the back row, Vice President (Vic) Colin Block and Past President, Bob Gaudion in May 2009*



*Bob Gaudion, proudly shows his Certificate of Appreciation*

### **Email: FROM BILL WALKER**



*Do you know any of these men?*

“My father William Henry Walker was part of the 26th Battalion.

I have attached a photo which I would be glad to share. My father is first from left with arms folded.

If you can determine who the other men are I would be glad to know. Regards, Bill Walker”



*Norman Turrell presents Bob Gaudion with his Life Membership, 2001*

## **SENIOR MOMENTS**

I'm retired. I was tired yesterday, and I am tired again today.

Cremation? Think outside the box!

At my age .. everything I buy comes with a lifetime guarantee

With age comes wisdom .. and discounts.

I was always taught to respect my elders. Now I don't have anyone to respect.

Sometimes I wake up grumpy ... and some days I let him sleep.

Quit worrying about your health. It'll go away.

Be nice to your children. They will choose your nursing home.

## **BRIEFS**

During a recent visit to Adelaide's War Memorial, Norm Turrell paid his respects to six members of 26 Battalion who lost their lives during their service to the unit.

T.G. Brady, G.R. Burton, L.E. Coulter, C.C. Dyer, B.F. Gregurke and M.C.C. Traeger.

We regret the passing last month of Keith Phelan of Bendigo.

Frank Duffy who has lived in Paynesville for many years has now moved to cared accommodation in Upper Heidelberg. His son Peter says his father is faring well.

At a recent meeting at Anzac House in Melbourne, the organisers have decided that due to the majority of aging veterans who are unable to march to the Shrine of Remembrance that there will be substantial changes to the 2010 Anzac Day programme. Details will be released in the next Newsletter.

## WWI SOLDIER'S MEDALS FOUND IN TRASH

By STEVE LILLEBUEN  
October 2, 2009

Medals given to the family of a slain Tasmanian soldier over 90 years ago have turned up in the trash in Melbourne. An Ascot Vale woman found two large bronze World War One medallions next to rubbish bins on Churchill Avenue in Melbourne's northwest.

The medals have been given to police but so far no one has been able to find the man's relatives.

The bronze medals are about the size of a small dinner plate. One is the "Rising Sun" Australian Imperial Force medal while the other police believe is a "Death Penny" that would have been given to his family upon his death.

The medals belong to the family of Edward Ernest Leonard Kimberley, who died in combat on May 28, 1916. He was 22 when he enlisted and he died just over five months later in France.

Mr Kimberley would have been one of the first Australian casualties of trench warfare on the Western front as a member of the 26th Battalion, according to Australian War Memorial (AWM) records. The 26th Battalion held recruits from Queensland and Tasmania and fought at Gallipoli.

Mr Kimberley enlisted in December 1915 when the battalion left for France. He was a miner in Tasmania and lived in Bangor, a small community northwest of Launceston. Despite his detailed military record, police have been unable to track down any surviving relatives.

Acting Senior Sergeant Vicki Key says they've checked



*Example of "Death Penny"*

records of any recent robberies and spoken to officials at the RSL and defence staff in Canberra and Tasmania but have come up empty-handed.

"It's proving fairly difficult at the moment," she told reporters outside the Moonee Ponds police station.

"Somebody must know of the family somewhere and as to how they came into Victoria." While the medals have no real monetary value, police want to return them for their sentimental reasons.

If the family can't be found, police are considering donating them to the war memorial in Canberra.

*This story was found at:*  
<http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/wwi-soldiers-medals-found-in-trash-20091002-gg6h.html>



## WW1 - GOODYEAR BROS.

Veronica Mason contacted the 26 Bn Assn via the website and wanted to share the stories about her great uncles.

Samuel Goodyear joined the 26th Battalion in January 1916 and was awarded the Italian Bronze Medal and later Mentioned in Dispatches for his work on Broodseinde Ridge in 1917.

According to the Australian War Memorial official records, the Australian troops involved the Battle of Broodseinde Ridge were shelled heavily on their start line and a seventh of their number became casualties even before the attack began. When it did, the attacking troops were confronted by a line of troops advancing towards them; the Germans had chosen the same morning to launch an attack of their own. The Australians forged on through the German assault waves and gained all their objectives along the ridge. It was not without cost, however. German pillboxes were characteristically difficult to subdue, and the Australian divisions suffered 6,500 casualties.

Although injured, Samael survived this and other battles and returned to Australia in December 1918.

Samuel's brother David was also in the 26th Bn. Both were wounded but Dave Goodyear lost the use of his arm when wounded for the second time during WW1. Both brothers died young Samuel was only 51 and his brother 61. It is believed they lived by themselves; Samuel up near Biloela, in Queensland and Dave lived at Liston, near the NSW and Queensland border.

*Left: Samuel Goodyear*